



Monique as a Grandma



I like this poem I found for my granddaughter Monique:

**Δεν γίνεται να μην πονώ,
Όταν πονάς μικρό μου
Αφού είσαι όλη μου η ζωή,
το αίμα μου, το φως μου.**

**It is not possible for me
not to hurt
when you hurt my little one
Because you are my whole life,
my blood, my light.**

Monique Frangouli
LLL Leader

I am a grandmother who continues to volunteer as a LLL leader, mostly phone call support, but I always have the LLL philosophy as a guide even now as a grandmother. I haven't seen most of my LLL friends and co-leaders for a long time. I keep in touch though by telephone, and when they ask me, "And how are you doing Monique?", I say, "I'm doing very well". Thanks to my Yoga exercises, brisk walks, swimming in the summertime, dancing Traditional Greek dances, and of course eating very carefully, "a great variety of foods as close to their natural state as possible" and lots of fruits and vegetables to keep my weight stable. All this I have learned from LLL – to have set a good example for my children when they were babies first and then as they got older, my husband, and all the while taking care of myself which I reap the benefits of now that I am a grandmother in my 70's, being able to be there for my grandchildren.

I first became a grandmother in my 50's and it was great! I had more energy. I was faster. However I can say that being a grandmother in my 70's is so much better. I know more. I may not be as fast now or as active, but I appreciate the knowledge I have learned and can be the best grandmother I can for my grandchildren. I am reaping the benefits that maturity brings.

My role model has been Edwina Froehlich, the eldest of the 7 LLL Founders, who passed away in June 2008, at the age of 93. She had eaten super healthy foods all her life and took care of herself. She was my heroine, the epitome of how I wanted to be. When I told her at an International LLL Conference in the United States

that I would like to be like her when I get older, she told me simply, "If that is what you want, then that's how it will be!". I felt like she was my fairy godmother!

Of course it was understood that I would work at it! After all, I had under by belt what I learned and lived through all those years following the LLL philosophy!

For years Edwina wanted to visit Greece. When she finally had the opportunity in 2003, we organized a mothers' Meeting at one of the Leaders' homes. It was very well attended – a real success! In order to attend this Meeting, Edwina preferred to skip visiting the Acropolis with her traveling group. Having a LLLI Founder come to LLL Greece was a great honor!

I am the eldest of 5 and even as a little girl, I always loved babies very much. So you can understand how thrilled I was when I became a grandmother again. My youngest granddaughter was born in September 2014 with a difference of 14 years from my oldest grandchildren. My husband and I were so excited to have a baby in the family again. He is a very good grandfather and we were looking forward to enjoying infants again.

I was trying to keep up with the newest information on childbirth and breastfeeding, studying hard before she was born, so that I would be able to help my daughter-in-law and son with their parenting and breastfeeding. You see, this son was my first "LLL baby". I went to my first LLL meeting with him at 2 weeks old in his carry cot, dummy and all, with sugared donuts (a new product in Athens at that time) for the hostess. She asked me at the end of the Meeting if I wanted to take them home for my children! I've come a long way since then. But I knew new times called for new ways of doing

and looking at things.

When little Monique was just a few days old, I quickly realized that I was only going to be able to help the new parents if I followed their ideas and cues and just give encouragement. I was in their home just as a grandma, not as a LLL Leader.

I get on very well with my daughter-in-law. So as you can see this allowed me to express my opinions and then, wait and see what the parents wanted to do with this or that idea. In the end it always has to be the parents' decision that prevails. Also, honesty has always helped our relationship. LLL has taught me that being honest with your little ones is best. Because of this honest and respectful relationship I have with my daughter-in-law, I feel comfortable visiting my granddaughter, who was baptized with my name, at least once a week because I adore her.

I have been able to help many moms over the years. I have learned that a mother must want to breastfeed in order for breastfeeding to succeed. I learned and tell them how important it is to listen to their heart and mother instinct, because nowadays there is so much information and we can easily get confused! The LLL philosophy stands strong and is a guide for all stages of motherhood.

Well, I hope you get an idea why I can say that I am doing very well. A birth of a baby is the most awesome and inspiring event. Babies are the future of our planet. Babies are my passion. Also I believe it is true as they say in Greece: Του παιδιού μου το παιδί είναι δύο φορές παιδί (Your child's child is twice your child). Our children help us to grow just as much as we help them.